



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## NOTES FOR BEGINNERS.

BY WILLIAM R. HARPER.

### II.

**The Origin of Long Vowels in Hebrew.**—In the study of etymological forms, we must start with the fact, *for it is a fact*, that all vowel-sounds of whatever quantity, character, or value, can be traced back to one of the three short vowels ä, ĩ, ũ. In the case of every long vowel, therefore, we must ask the questions :—(1) From what original (short) vowel has this vowel come? (2) What influence was exerted to make it long? It is taken for granted that a vowel which was originally short would have remained short, had there not been some reason for its change. All long vowels, therefore, may be classified under four heads :—

1. Those which have arisen from the contraction of two distinct vowels; here belong

- (a) â (= a+a), as in קָאֵם = qâm = qă-ăm for qă-wăm; so also שָׂאֵחַ = šâth' for šā-yăth.
- (b) î (= i+y or y+i), as in יֵשֵׁן = yî-šan = yÿ-y-šan, and יָקִים = yā-qîm = yăq-yîm for yăq-wîm.
- (c) û (= u+w or w+u) as in הוֹסֵר = hû-šār = hŭw-šār, and תָּשׁוּב = tā-šûbh tăš-wûbh.
- (d) ê (a+i= or y), as in בֵּין = bēn = băy(ÿ)n; פְּנֵי = p'nê = p'năy; תִּיטִיב = tē-tîbh = tăy-tîbh; עֵשֶׂה = 'sê = 'săy.
- (e) ô (= a+u or w), as in יוֹם = yôm = yăwm; הוֹלִיד = hô-lîdh (= hăw-lîdh).

In an exhaustive treatment there must also be included under this class the comparatively rare *ê* (e) which, like *ê*, everywhere comes from a contraction of *ay*.\*

As the result of *contraction*, therefore, arise a very large number of the Hebrew long vowels. This is a principle common to all languages.

2. A second class includes those which have become long, as being characteristic of a nominal form; here belong

- (a) â (from an original ä) as in גָּנַב = gännâbh, כָּתַב k'thâbh.
- (b) î (from an original ĩ) as in יָמִין = yā-mîn = yă-mîñ; חָסִיד = hā-šîdh = hă-šîdh.
- (c) û (from an original ũ) as in קָטוּל = qā-tûl = qă-tûl; כָּרוּב = k'rûbh = kŭ-rûbh, or kÿ-rûbh.

---

\* This vowel, indicated for the sake of distinction, by an italicized *e*, is found (a) in *Im-perfects* and *Imperatives* before the fem. plur. term. נָה, and after the analogy of these forms, also as the separating vowel in similar *י"ע* and *ע"ע* forms; (b) in forms of plural nouns before the suffixes ך and ך.

(d) ô (obscured from â, which is from an original ă) as in קָטוּל (קָטַל) = qā-tûl = qā-tâl = qă-tâl; קָדוּשׁ = qā-dhōš = qă-dhâš = qă-dhăš; קוּטֵל (קָטַל) = qô-têl = qâ-tîl = qă-tîl.

It will be worth our while here to note carefully the origin of the forms of the Qāl Inf. abs. and Part. act., viz., קָטַל, קָטֵל, or, as they are often, but improperly, written, קוּטֵל, קוּטֵל.

The original stem-form, after the loss of the final ă, is qă-tâl; to get a *noun-form*, which shall serve as an infinitive, the ultimate ă is lengthened *characteristically* to â. Subsequently, because of certain euphonic laws in force every where in Hebrew, the penultimate ă is heightened to ā, the â is obscured to ô. Compare, now, the corresponding forms in Arabic and Assyrian qâtâl and qă-tâl(u), which are, indeed, identical with the ground-form of קָטַל.

Starting again with the stem qă-tâl, by a *characteristic* lengthening of the penultimate ă, there was obtained a second nominal form qâ-tâl, which served as a participle. Here again by the working of the laws of heightening and obscuration qâ-tâl becomes (through qâ-tîl) qô-têl. With the intermediate form qâ-tîl compare the Arabic and Assyrian participles, which have precisely this form.

It is to be remembered that vowels which became long as being *characteristic* of a nominal form belong to the primitive Semitic; that is to say, these vowels arose before the Arabic, Assyrian and other Semitic languages had become separate tongues. We do not mean to say that every instance of each of these formations was in existence before these languages had become separate; but that the use of a long (unchangeable) vowel to mark a nominal form originated in the so-called primitive Semitic tongue, and that all instances of this in these languages have arisen in accordance with this original usage. A distinction something like this is seen in דָּבַר the verb and דָּבָר the noun; in נָקַט the verb and נָקֵט the noun (participle).

By the principle of *lengthening* (which is the change of ă to â, ĩ to î, ŭ to û, not that of ă to ā, ĩ to ē, ŭ to o) we may therefore explain a very large number of long vowels in Hebrew, the lengthening, in these cases, being understood to *characterize* the nominal form.

3. The third class includes those which have been *lengthened* (not *heightened*) in compensation. The cases are few and doubtful. As examples may be cited קִטּוּר for קָטוּר, קִמּוּשׁ for קָמוּשׁ. Under ordinary circumstances a vowel is *heightened* in compensation for the loss of a consonant, but in a few cases real lengthening takes place. Forms also like נָקִים, which = năqâm = năq-wăm = nă-qăm, contain a vowel lengthened in compensation for the loss of ך. This class, however, needs no further notice.

4. The fourth class includes those vowels which have become long through the operation of that great euphonic law, the law of the tone; here belong

- (a) ā (always from an original ă and standing directly before or under the tone\*) as in דָּבָר from dā-bhār; אֲכָלָה from 'ă-khāl-tā; יָבֵשָׁה from yāb-bā-šāth; מָקוֹם from māq-wām.
- (b) ē (from ĭ, and standing directly before or under the tone), as in בֵּין from bīn (for בְּנִי); לֶכֶב from lĭ-bhābh; זָקֵן from ză-qīn; סֵפֶר from šĭphr; יֵיטֵב from yĭ-šĭbh (for yĭw-šĭbh).
- (c) ō (from ŭ, and standing directly before or under the tone) as in קֹטֵל from q'ŭl; כֹּל from kŭll; גֹּרֵשׁ from gŭr-rāš; חֹשֶׁךְ from ḥăšk.
- (d) é (always from an original ă, and standing directly before or under the tone†) as in אָחֵד from 'ă-ḥādh; עָרֵב from 'ārb; נֹעֲשֶׂה from nă-'āśy; תִּקְרָאנָה from tiq-ră-nā.

The vowels of this class have arisen by heightening, not lengthening. The term *heightening* is a technical one; the change is an artificial increment, or strengthening, brought about by the introduction of a foreign element, viz., an *a*-sound (cf. the *guna* in Sanskrit). The original vowel in these cases is therefore increased, *heightened* (e. g., ĭ to ē, ŭ to ō), and not merely prolonged, *lengthened* (e. g., ĭ to î, ŭ to û). These vowels may be described more distinctly as follows:—

(1) They are *tone-long*; i. e., their length is due to the tone or accent of the word. They are long because of their proximity to this tone.

(2) They are *artificially* long; i. e., they are not long by nature, or by origin. They *were* short, and would now be short but for the tone. Contracted long vowels and characteristically long vowels are so *by nature*, tone-long vowels are so *by position*.

(3) They are *euphonically* long; i. e., they are long merely for the sake of euphony. The heightened form has no meaning. It sounds better, and hence it is preferred.

(4) They are *changeable*; i. e., if the tone, to which they are indebted for their very existence, should be moved, they no longer have any reason for existence and so must suffer change.

(5) They are, for the most part, *tonic* and *pretonic*; i. e., they must stand with the tone or before it. The most important euphonic law of the Hebrew language, connected with this, may be stated thus: A short vowel standing directly‡ before or under the tone must be heightened.

It is to be noted in connection with this very brief and general statement of the law, (a) that heightened vowels occur sometimes in the antepretone, and likewise

\* This ā stands rarely two syllables before the tone, as in הָאָדָם, where, however, it is protected by Methegh; and, sometimes, in the post-tone syllable, as in קָטֵלָהּ.

† As in the case of tone-long *a*, this vowel occurs rarely two syllables before the tone, as in הֵעֵפָר, where, also like *a* it is maintained by means of Methegh.

‡ That is, without an intervening consonant.

in the post-tone syllable; and (b) that, within certain rigid limitations a short vowel is allowed to stand in a tone-syllable. All cases, however, of either of these seeming variations from the general law are capable of satisfactory explanation.

By the principle of heightening, therefore, we may explain a large number of long vowels; and this principle, like that of contraction and lengthening, is one common to all languages.

---

**Repetition of Words.**—We frequently find a word repeated in Hebrew, e. g.:

- 1) Gen. XVII., 2 **בְּמֵאדָּ מְאֹד** *in high degree, high degree*;  
 1 Sam. II., 3 **גְּבוּהָהּ גְּבוּהָהּ** *proudly, proudly*.
- 2) Gen. VII., 2 **שִׁבְעָה שִׁבְעָה** *seven by seven*;  
 Exod. XVII., 16 **מִדֹּר דֹּר** *from generation to generation*.
- 3) Gen. XIV., 10 **בְּאֵרַת בְּאֵרַת** *many wells*;  
 2 Kgs. III., 16 **גְּבִים גְּבִים** *many ditches*.
- 4) Gen. XV., 18 **הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל נָהָר פָּרַת** *the great river, the river Euphrates*.

From the study of these cases, it will be noted that different ideas are conveyed by the repetition. In the first cases cited (cf. also Gen. x., 21; xxii., 20) the idea is that of *emphasis* or *intensity*. In the second class (cf. also Gen. xxxii., 17; Exod. xvi., 5; xxiii., 30; xxv., 35; xxxvi., 4), there is indicated the idea of *distribution*, *entirety*. In the third class the idea indicated is that of *multitude*. The fourth class (cf. also Gen. xxv., 30; xxxv., 14) is quite different from the preceding classes. Here the noun is repeated in order to make it possible for a new idea to be added without rendering the construction a faulty one.

---

**A Noun in the Construct Relation with a Clause.**—This construction may at first trouble the beginner. Note the following examples:

Exod. VI., 28 **בְּיוֹם דִּבֶּר יְהוָה** *On the day (that) Jehovah spake*.

1 Sam. xxv., 15 **יְמֵי הַתֵּהֱלֵכְנוּ אִתָּם** *the days we walked with them*.

Ps. lvi., 4 **יוֹם אִירָא** *the day I fear*.

Cf. also Gen. xxxix., 20; xl., 3; Exod. iv., 13; 1 Sam. iii., 13; 1 Kgs. xxi., 19.

It will be seen (a) that the clause is a relative one, though the relative may be omitted; (b) the noun which stands thus is one expressing a general idea of *place, time, or manner*.